

# FLUSHING STADIUM APPROVED BY CITY

## Vote by Board of Estimate Assures New League of a Home Park Here

**By CHARLES G. BENNETT**

The proposed 55,000-seat \$15,-000,000 sports stadium to be built in Flushing Meadow Park, Queens, was informally approved yesterday by the Board of Estimate in executive session. The vote was 20 to 2.

The board's action, assuring a home for New York's entry in the new Continental Baseball League, was in effect a commitment to approve the stadium formally at today's regular calendar meeting.

The city's approval of its stadium is expected to be a signal for the other cities in the new league—Minneapolis-St. Paul, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, Denver, Toronto, Atlanta and Buffalo—to begin construction of their stadiums.

Mayor Wagner disclosed that he had received telegrams from several of these cities saying they would not go forward with their ball parks unless New York paved the way.

### Mayor Makes Announcement

The announcement of yesterday's action was made by the Mayor early last evening following an hour-long discussion of the subject with his seven Board of Estimate colleagues. Since early afternoon, the board had been discussing its full calendar for today's meeting.

The board's action was to authorize Praeger-Kavanagh-Waterbury, engineers-architects, to prepare final plans for the stadium costing \$442,500, and to direct the Park Department to prepare the Queens park for the stadium at a cost of \$75,000.

The same engineer-architect firm prepared the preliminary plans at a cost of \$170,000.

The only two votes against the stadium were cast by Borough President James J. Lyons of the Bronx, home borough of Yankee Stadium. Mr. Lyons has argued that the city should give top priority in new sports improvements to providing addi-

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tional parking space for the Yankees' home arena.

Mr. Lyons explained, however, that his opposition to the Queens stadium was based on "certain legal objections" that had not been answered to his satisfaction. He said that until these objections were met, he would feel forced to continue to oppose the project.

A threat of possible opposition by Controller Lawrence E. Gerosa failed to materialize. Mr. Gerosa cast his four votes for the stadium. A spokesman for the Controller said Mr. Gerosa was satisfied that the project would not cost the city's taxpayers anything, and that the annual rental guaranteed by the backers would be sufficient to amortize the cost.

## City to Build Stadium

The financing plans call for the city to build the stadium, floating bonds outside its debt limit, and then to lease the structure to the baseball franchise owners.

One proposal for self-liquidation has been for the city to issue thirty-year bonds. These would be paid off on the basis of \$900,000 a year in rentals. Other proposals have been to issue shorter-term bonds that would require greater rental receipts to retire.

The plans are for New York's entry in the Continental League to begin play in 1961 — probably at the Polo Grounds — and move into its new stadium in 1962.

Branch Rickey is president of the Continental League. A prime mover in the stadium project has been William A. Shea, chairman of Mayor Wagner's special committee on baseball.

Mr. Rickey had warned the city that the entire future of the projected third league — and a second major league team for New York — rested on the new stadium.

Last night Mr. Shea hailed the Board of Estimate's action. He said:

"The Board of Estimate's action in approving the new sports stadium is a real milestone for the city. It will be a great thing for the city and for sports generally. We can now go ahead with plans to bring another big league team to New York."

Donald Grant, the president of the New York team in the new league, said:

"We always believed Mayor Wagner was a man of his word, and this is a mere confirmation of our belief. It is also an indication that Bill Shea, having been given a mandate by the Mayor to produce a second big-league baseball team for New York City, has fulfilled the first part of his assignment. We are all very happy."

## Parking for 5,500 Cars

The new stadium, with its parking field for 5,500 cars, will occupy a site at the north end of Flushing Meadow Park.

The tract lies between Grand Central Parkway and 126th Street. It extends from Roosevelt Avenue to Northern Boulevard. Just south of the arena tract, also in Flushing Meadow Park, lies the site of the 1964-65 World's Fair.

Plans for the stadium call for an open-end, three-tier circular structure. There would be movable sections so designed as to convert the stadium to football use.

The structure will be so built that a roof or dome can be added later, if wanted, for \$3,500,000 additional to provide for all-weather sport. Also, a \$5,000,000 section can be added at the stadium's open end later.

Yesterday's action—and today's—by the Board of Estimate had been forecast by Mayor Wagner at a City Hall meeting of sports writers on April 12.

## Two Teams Departed

At that time, the Mayor, who had been pressing for a second big-league baseball team for New York since the National League's Giants and Dodgers left at the end of the 1957 season, declared that the drive for the new stadium would be pushed through "to a successful conclusion."

"We couldn't turn back now if we wanted to," Mayor Wagner told the April 12 meeting.

Park Commissioner Robert Moses and his executive officer, Stuart Constable, both of whom are slated to leave their city jobs soon for top posts in the 1964-65 World's Fair, have supported the stadium plan since it was proposed. Also, they have been eager to have the structure in the Queens park.

Under the Board of Estimate's system of multiple voting, the three city-wide members—the Mayor, the Controller and the City Council President—cast four votes each. The five Borough Presidents cast two votes each.



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## HAILS STADIUM PLAN:

William A. Shea, head of Mayor Wagner's baseball committee. He praised the Board of Estimate's vote for a new Queens stadium.